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**Federal Communications Commission  
Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Services  
Planning Subcommittee  
Working Party 7: Audience Research**

**THIRD REPORT**

**January 1991**

Richard V. Ducey, Chairman  
Senior VP Research and Planning  
National Association of Broadcasters

Bruce Huber, Vice Chairman  
VP Marketing-Consumer Electronics  
Zenith Electronics Corporation

Howard Miller, Vice Chairman  
Senior VP Broadcast Operations/Engineering  
Public Broadcasting System

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its last report, Working Party 7 has focused primarily on its new work statement in which the group was called upon to: (a) seek financial support for proposed audience research program; and (b) develop a liaison with SS/WP2 to assess possible synergies between their activities and those of PS/WP7.

WP7 held a meeting on July 11, 1990 at NAB Headquarters in Washington, D.C. to discuss these items. Actions pursuant to this meeting have not been fruitful in terms of securing funding or in identifying meaningful ways in which WP7 could develop a productive liaison with SS/WP2 due to the fundamentally different goals and methods of the two working parties.

WP7 was also to have considered a study for evaluating audience responses to letter boxed television pictures (i.e., displaying a widescreen picture in an NTSC format in a fashion that leaves some form of bars at the top and bottom on the picture). Since the Advanced Television Test Center awarded a contract for this research, WP7 sought to coordinate its interests with those of ATTC. Ultimately, this was not a productive path. Currently, the point is largely moot because none of the six proponent systems have indicated that they will employ a letter box solution and ATTC has therefore decided to cancel its work in this area.

In conclusion, it appears that while WP7 was able to develop a comprehensive research program to investigate consumer reactions to advanced television systems, the research cannot be executed due to lack of financial support forthcoming from industry, foundation or government sources. Without such support, WP7's further support in standard setting activities must be constrained to service in an advisory capacity.

## INTRODUCTION

The FCC ATS Planning Subcommittee formed Working Party 7 in December 1988 and charged it with developing a comprehensive research program to define, plan and execute research operations which will lead to an understanding of viewers' preferences in the field of advanced television. After extensive work to define and plan a research program rigorous enough to withstand the industry's requirements, financial support has not been forthcoming to enable the execution of the research program.

In this Third Report of PS/WP7, we will summarize the efforts of WP7 since our Second Report was submitted about a year ago. This report will cover the three areas of responsibility assigned to us by the Planning Subcommittee chairman. These areas are: (1) Letter Box Study, (2) Financial Support for the Research Program, and (3) Liaison with SS/WP2.

## LETTER BOX STUDY

WP7 was directed to consider undertaking a study of consumer reactions to letter box displays, in conjunction with the Advanced Television Test Center, if possible. In March 1990, the ATTC announced a research contract which was awarded to Stanford University to conduct this study. As defined by the ATTC, "a 'letterbox' appears on today's home TV sets, when a 'wide screen' picture is to be displayed on a conventional TV set. In order to retain the wider aspect ratio, black borders would frame the picture at the top and bottom of the television screen."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Advanced TV Test Center to Study Consumer Reaction to 'Letterbox Displays'," ATTC New Release, March 16, 1990.

Ultimately, the ATTC decided to abandon the study due to changing circumstances. Among other things, of the six current proponent systems none have announced plans for relying on letter box applications (five are simulcast systems and the sixth has not announced plans to use a letter box technique for achieving compatibility with NTSC sets).

**Given the ATTC's actions and the realization that letter box research is no longer relevant to the FCC's advanced television standard setting task, WP7 terminated its efforts in this area.**

#### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

The research program recommended by WP7 would require an investment of approximately \$800,000, depending upon final specifications and the availability of in-kind support (e.g., technical facilities, programming). The likely sources of funding were determined to be the FCC, proponent systems or foundations. The Advisory Committee informed WP7 that the FCC had no such funding available and directed the group to seek its own funding. Should any such funding be forthcoming, strict FCC requirements regarding the amount of funding received from any one party and accounting procedures would have to be met.

Investigation into various potential funding sources was not fruitful. It does not appear that consumer research is a funding priority for the advanced television systems proponents, for foundations most active in the area of communications and technology research, or among different agencies of the government.

**It is the conclusion of WP7 that there is no funding source available to enable the research program to be executed as designed.**

## **LIAISON WITH SS/WP2**

The agenda of SS/WP2 calls for fundamentally different goals and methods to be addressed compared to PS/WP7's work statement. While SS/WP2 has commissioned the creation of creative material, it is not of the character that it could be useful in any consumer research. For example, the program segments are typically ten seconds in duration. For the WP7 research effort, the type and length of programming which is normally encountered in the traditional audience viewing experience is required. While some efficiencies might have been realized by sharing technical facilities, with no funding available to WP7 it did not make sense to pursue even this opportunity.

**WP7 concludes that while there might be some opportunity for achieving some efficiencies by coordinating its work with SS/WP2 (or other working parties), the benefits are small and the point is moot in any case due to the lack of funding.**

## **CONCLUSION**

Working Party 7 was able to develop a comprehensive and rigorous audience research program which would be well suited to investigating and documenting audience reactions to advanced television systems. Given funding priorities, it appears that this research cannot be supported. WP7 sees no reason to expect circumstances will change in the near future. The hardworking members of WP7 have provided exemplarily service of the highest professional calibre at the expense of their own companies and personal schedules. For this, we are both most impressed and grateful. So that the collective wisdom, enthusiasm and experience of the members of WP7 is not lost to the Advisory Committee, we offer our continuing commitment to participate in the process in an advisory role.



**Advisory Committee on  
Advanced Television (ATV) Service**

Doc. No. PS/WP7-0084

Date 11 Jul 90

**Planning Subcommittee -- Working Party 7 (Audience Research)**

**MINUTES**

**Wednesday, July 11, 1990  
National Association of Broadcasters  
Washington, D.C.**

**PRESENT:** Rick Ducey, Gwen Wood (for Howard Miller), Steve Sigman (for Bruce Huber), Tim Schnacke (for Frank Jazzo), Barbara Lee, Fareena Sultan, Rich Feldman, Gerry Hartshorn, Guy Lometti, David Donnelly, Jim Fletcher, Russ Neuman, Wes Vivian, Joanna Lei.

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. in the McCollough Room, NAB Headquarters, 1771 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.
2. The minutes of November 30, 1989 were approved.
3. Mr. Ducey reviewed the recent actions of the Advisory Committee and the Planning Subcommittee. The 3rd Interim Report was approved. Mr. Flaherty directed that the Planning Subcommittee's work should be completed in the July to December 1990 timeframe. His recommendation, which was accepted by the Advisory Committee, was that PS/WP-7's work is not part of the critical path and that no elements of the overall work toward recommending a standard to the FCC should be held up by WP7's work. WP7 may be best positioned to conduct tests in conjunction with proponent system field tests. By October 1992 the Advisory Committee plans to recommend a standard to the FCC and Mr. Sikes indicated that by the second quarter of 1993 the FCC's work will be done and a final standard selected.
4. The new work statement for WP7 was discussed. Mr. Flaherty directed that WP7 coordinate, where possible with SS/WP2. Mr. Ducey reported that he had discussions with SS/WP2 chair Mark Richer to compare WP7's agenda with that of SS/WP2. There appeared to be little opportunity for accomplishing WP7's objectives by cooperating in any of SS/WP2's areas. The better opportunity appears to exist in seeking cooperative endeavors with PS/WP6 or perhaps SS/WP4. Mr. Ducey will pursue this.
5. The other component of the new WP7 work statement dealt with the assignment of seeking funding for the audience research program the group proposed in its last

report. Mr. Ducey reported that his preliminary investigations revealed that financial support would not be easily forthcoming from the private or public sectors. The Advisory Committee will not provide funding, the Advanced Television Test Center has expressed no interest in funding WP7 and even took the step of announcing that it will not share findings from its on-going audience research which is of great interest to WP7. Mr. Miller indicated that DoD and DARPA funds are unlikely to be targeted to WP7's areas of interest. At least one of the proponent systems indicated to Mr. Ducey that it would not fund WP7 research, in fact, it might not even have the funds available to commit to its own audience research. It was suggested that the Markey bill may provide additional funding capacity for the FCC and that some of this funding might be targeted to audience research.

6. In spite of the lack of support received thus far, WP7 decided to continue pursuing funding opportunities. Mr. Ducey agreed to draft a letter which will be sent to the most likely sources of funding agencies, including private foundations. All members and interested parties are invited to contact Mr. Ducey to identify or suggest possible funding agencies.
7. Mr. Ducey provided a brief review of ATTC actions. First, the Letter Box Study has been awarded to Dr. Byron Reeves at Stanford University. The research is underway, but the ATTC has decided to not release any details of the study to WP7. Additionally, the ATTC considered WP7's interest in RFP-1 ("TV Store Study") and voted to not offer any funding for this study.
8. No date was set for future meetings. Mr. Ducey reported that he will circulate a draft of his fundraising letter for comment. A list of prospective funding groups was developed and prioritized. Pending the outcome of this effort, it will be decided when WP7 should meet next.
9. Dr. Neumann announced that he had received permission to distribute some research recently completed at MIT. He will send a report to those on the WP7 mailing list. He is also completing a review of the six major HDTV audience research studies (3-MIT; 2-HBO and Hughes). He will also send this report to WP7 members.
9. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

## Working Party 7: Audience Research

January 4, 1991

### Documents -- Master List

PS/WP7 #	Date	Author/Firm	Title
0001	15 Dec 88	Joe Flaherty, CBS	Letter forming WP7 (2 pp)
0002	23 Dec 88	Rick Ducey, NAB	Letter inviting interested parties to WP7 meetings (9 pp)
0003	04 Jan 89	Irwin Dorros, Bellcore	Letter: Comments on ATV programming and viewer control (2 pp) (xref SS-0089/04 Jan 89)
0004	09 Jan 89	L.J. Thorpe, Sony	HDTV Image Presentation to Consumer Audiences (13 pp)
0005	27 Dec 88	Richard Feldman, NBC	Proposal for Consumer Research (3 pp)
0006	28 Dec 88	Robert Maxwell, HBO	Consumer Response to HDTV (38 pp)
0007	28 Dec 88	Cmte. for NA HDTV Demo	North American HDTV Demo to the Public (17 pp)
0008	10 Jan 89	W. Russell Neuman, MIT	Mass Audience Looks at HDTV: An Early Experiment (13 pp)
0009	11 Jan 89	Greg DePriest, MST	Response to Rich Feldman's Proposal (PS/WP7-0005) (3 pp)
0010	11 Jan 89	WP-7	Scope and Work Statement (as revised from PS/WP7-0001) (1 p)
0011	11 Jan 89	Bruce Huber, Zenith	Research Proposal (3 pp)
0012	11 Jan 89	W. Russell Neuman, MIT	Research Proposal (Audience Demand for HDTV) (6 pp)
0013	11 Jan 89	PS/WP6	Final Report, Section III ("Subjective Test Methods: Social Science") (13 pp)
0014	24 Jan 89	Cmte. for NA HDTV Demo	Detailed Survey Results/Nov 1988 (120 pp)
0015	24 Jan 89	Howard Miller, PBS	ATTC Approach to Audience Research (3 pp)
0016	25 Jan 89	Russ Neuman, MIT	Key Issues for WP-7 (2 pp)



## PS/WP-7 Documents Master List/2

0017	25 Jan 89	Karen Pitts, Sarnoff	Analysis Results from Original Widescreen Tests (9 pp)
0018	25 Jan 89	Wes Vivian, Univ. Michigan	Summary of Published Market Research (9 pp)
0019	13 Jan 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	Summary of WP-7 meeting 1/11/89 (2 pp)
0020	30 Jan 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	Minutes of Jan 25, 1989 meeting (4 pp)
0021	31 Jan 89	Bob Maxwell, HBO	Letter to Guy Lometti re design of "In Store Study" (see PS/WP7-0027) (1 p)
0022	02 Feb 89	Russ Neuman, MIT	Contribution to Introduction of WP7 Report (2 pp)
0023	06 Feb 89 12 Sep 89	Yozo Ono, NHK Wes Vivian, Univ. Michigan (coordinators)	Task Group 3 ("In-Depth Study") Research Review (9 pp)
0024	06 Feb 89 12 Sep 89	Karen Pitts, DSRC (coordinator)	Task Group 2 ("Technical Study") Research Plan (6 pp)
0025	06 Feb 89 12 Sep 89	Russ Neuman, MIT (coordinator)	Task Group 4 ("Advanced TV Study") Research Plan (3pp)
0026	07 Feb 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	Response to PS/WP7-0023 (1 p)
0027	07 Feb 89 09 Feb 89 12 Sep 89	Rich Feldman (coordinator)	Task Group 1 ("In Store Study") Research Plan (8 pp)
0028	09 Feb 89	Wes Vivian, Univ. MI	Proposals for In-Depth Studies Based on NHK Cooperation (4 pp)
0029	09 Feb 89	Yozo Ono, NHK	Response to PS/WP7-0023, 0024 (2 pp)
0030	10 Feb 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	Response to PS/WP7-0029
0031	10 Feb 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	Summary of Feb 8, 1989 Teleconference (2 pp)
0032	16 Feb 89 28 Feb 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	Draft WP7 Chairman's Report (10 pp)
0033	21 Feb 89	Bob Maxwell, HBO	Comments on PS/WP7-0032 (1 pp)
0034	29 Mar 89	Lynn Hollister, Group W	Comments on Final Report (2 pp)

## PS/WP-7 Documents Master List/3

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0035	28 Jun 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	Summary of June 28, 1989 meeting (5 pp)
0036	23 Aug 89	Rich Feldman, NBC	Widescreen Research Reults (3 pp)
0037	12 Sep 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	Summary of Aug. 23, 1989 meeting (3 pp)
0038	12 Sep 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	RFPs 1-4 & Recipient List (27 pp)
0039	26 Jul 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	ATTC Letterbox RFP (4 pp)
0040	25 Sep 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	WP7 support request to Wiley (1 pp)
0041	12 Oct 89	Steve Rose, Daniel Yankelovich Grp., Inc.	RFP-1 proposal (17 pp)
0042	10 Oct 89	Bryon Reeves, Stanford U.	Comments on RFP-2 (2 pp)
0043	11 Oct 89	Jim Spaeth, Viewfacts, Inc.	RFP-1 proposal (8 pp)
0044	11 Oct 89	Jim Spaeth, Viewfacts, Inc.	RFP-2-4 combo proposal (8 pp)
0045	11 Oct 89	Mindy Rhindress, AHF Marketing Research, Inc.	RFP-2 proposal (10 pp)
0046	11 Oct 89	Phil Jursek, Norman Hecht Research, Inc.	RFP-1 proposal (13 pp)
0047	11 Oct 89	Terry Vavra, Marketing Metrics, Inc.	RFP-1 proposal (67 pp)
0048	11 Oct 89	Irving Crespi, Total Research Corp.	RFP-1 proposal (23 pp)
0049	11 Oct 89	Bob LaRose, Michigan State University	RFP-4 proposal (34 pp)
0050	12 Oct 89	Linda McAleer, The Melior Group	RFP-4 proposal (15 pp)
0051	06 Oct 89	Ira Potashner, Eric Marder & Associates	RFP-1 proposal (6 pp)
0052	06 Oct 89	Ira Potashner, Eric Marder & Associates	RFP-2 proposal (7 pp)
0053	10 Oct 89	Warren Johnson, Am. Public Opinion Svy. & Mkt. Rsch. Corp.	RFP-1 proposal (17 pp)
0054	10 Oct 89	Warren Johnson, Am. Public	RFP-2 proposal (15 pp)

## PS/WP-7 Documents Master List/4

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		Opinion Svy. & Mkt. Rsch. Corp.	
0055	10 Oct 89	Warren Johnson, Am. Public Opinion Svy. & Mkt. Rsch. Corp.	RFP-4 proposal (15 pp)
0056	12 Oct 89	Vincent Boccanfuso, Jr., D. Sarnoff Research Ctr.	RFP-2 proposal (17 pp)
0057	13 Oct 89	John Polich, MOR/New York	RFP-1 proposal (14 pp)
0058	13 Oct 89	John Polich, MOR/New York	RFP-2 proposal (14 pp)
0059	13 Oct 89	John Polich, MOR/New York	RFP-4 proposal (13 pp)
0060	12 Oct 89	Terry Vavra, Marketing Metrics, Inc.	RFP-4 proposal (69 pp)
0061	28 Sep 89 18 Oct 89	Tom Bentsen, NASA	Comments on Lechner distance (2 pp)
0062	19 Oct 89	Herb Altman, B'cst. Research & Consulting, Inc.	RFP-2 proposal (26 pp)
0063	19 Oct 89	Jim Spaeth, Viewfacts, Inc.	Conjoint analysis approach (1 pp)
0064	23 Oct 89	Art Allison, EMC <sup>2</sup>	RFP evaluation scale (3 pp)
0065	27 Oct 89	Herb Altman, B'cst. Rsch. & Consulting, Inc.	RFP-1 proposal (30 pp)
0066	02 Nov 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	RFP evaluation guidelines (2 pp)
0067	17 Nov 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	Minutes - October 18, 1989 meeting (3 pp)
0068	17 Nov 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	Agenda - November 30, 1989 meeting (2 pp)
0069	20 Nov 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	WP7 Chairman's Progress Report (1 pp)
0070	22 Nov 89	Steve Sigman, Zenith	Task Group/RFP-1 Evaluation Report (3 pp)
0071	01 Nov 89	Howard Miller, PBS	Task Group/RFP-2 Update 1 (1 pp w/o appendix)
0072	02 Nov 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	Letter regarding WP7 vice chair resignation (1pp)
0073	07 Nov 89	Howard Miller, PBS	Task Group/RFP-2 Update 2 (1 pp w/o appendix)

## PS/WP-7 Documents Master List/5

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0074	16 Nov 89	Howard Miller, PBS	Task Group/RFP-2 Update 3 (57 pp)
0075	17 Nov 89	Howard Miller, PBS	Task Group/RFP-2 Report (7 pp)
0076	30 Nov 89	Russ Neuman, MIT	Task Group/RFP-4 Report (2 pp)
0077	05 Dec 89	Rich Feldman, NBC Cable	Task Group/RFP-1 Report (2 pp)
0078	12 Dec 89	Rick Ducey, NAB	WP7 Nov 30 meeting minutes (3 pp)
0079	15 Dec 89 07 Feb 90 21 Feb 90	Rick Ducey, NAB	WP7 Second Report (24 pp w/o appendices)
0080	03 Jan 90	Rick Ducey, NAB	Letter to J. Abel regarding ATTC Letter Box Study (1 p)
0081	07 Feb 90	Robert Maxwell, HBO	Consumer Response to HDTV - January '89 study (44 pp)
0082 (a)	09 Mar 90	John D. Abel, NAB	Response to 0080 (1 p)
0082 (b)	09 Mar 90	John D. Abel, NAB	Response to funding inquiry (1 p)
0083	01 Jun 90	Rick Ducey, NAB	WP7 July 11 meeting (14 pp)
0084	11 Jul 90	Rick Ducey, NAB	WP7 July 11 minutes (2 pp)
0085	18 Jul 90	Rick Ducey, NAB	Fundraising letter (1 p)
0086	20 Jul 90	Rick Ducey, NAB	Response to PS-0078 (1 p)
0087	12 Dec 90	Rick Ducey, NAB	WP7 Third Report